

Marshall University Marshall Digital Scholar

Theses, Dissertations and Capstones

1-1-2009

The Effect of Character Education on Emotional Intelligence

Jennifer Doak
doak@marshall.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://mds.marshall.edu/etd>

 Part of the [School Psychology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Doak, Jennifer, "The Effect of Character Education on Emotional Intelligence" (2009). *Theses, Dissertations and Capstones*. Paper 568.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations and Capstones by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact zhangj@marshall.edu.

The Effect of Character Education on Emotional Intelligence

Thesis submitted to the Graduate College of Marshall University

In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Education Specialist in
the School Psychology Program

By

Jennifer Doak

Sandra S. Stroebel, Ph.D., Committee Chairperson

Fred Jay Krieg, Ph.D

Edna Meisel, Ed.D.

Marshall University

May 2009

ABSTRACT

Research has shown that children who fail to develop emotional intelligence are prone toward anti-social and self-destructive behaviors. The purpose of this study was to determine if the book *Sad, Mad, Glad* and subsequent character education lesson plans have an effect on children's emotional intelligence. Such results are important, because teaching children to be aware of their emotions helps them with self-regulation and social interaction. Also, it is important to determine if character education programs are effective before widespread implementation occurs in educational settings. Fifty-four students, ages 5-11, from the MUGC Summer Enrichment Program participated in the study. It was hypothesized that emotional intelligence scores obtained after the character education lesson plans would be significantly different compared to those obtained before. Results from paired samples t-tests showed no significant differences between the means, indicating that the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and character education lessons did not significantly affect emotional intelligence.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Tables.....	v
Chapter I: Review of Literature.....	1
Empathy.....	1
Stress Management.....	3
Adaptability.....	4
Character Education.....	5
Purpose of Study.....	8
Hypotheses.....	8
Chapter II: Method.....	10
Participants	10
Instruments.....	10
Procedures.....	12
Definition of terms.....	13
Chapter III: Results.....	14
Chapter IV: Discussion.....	22
References.....	24

Acknowledgements

I would like to express gratitude to all my fellow classmates that assisted with data collection during the Summer Enrichment Program. To Chuck Stump and Jim Strawn, I appreciate your willingness to allow me to conduct research with the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and for generously providing copies of the book to all of the students who participated in the study. I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Meisel for the assistance with the data analysis. To Dr. Stroebel, I would like to express gratitude for assurance and help throughout the research process. I would like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Krieg for his guidance throughout this program. Last, I would like to thank my family for their unconditional support throughout the duration of this program.

List of Tables

Table 1: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, All Students.....	15
Table 2: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 5.....	16
Table 3: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 6.....	17
Table 4: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 7.....	18
Table 5: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 8.....	19
Table 6: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 9.....	20
Table 7: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 10.....	21

CHAPTER I

Literature Review

Emotional intelligence is often defined as the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in self and others (Riley & Schutte, 2003). It is viewed as a complex construct comprised of many subfactors, which has led to a lack of a universally accepted operational definition. Although researchers disagree on the definition, most are in agreement that key features of emotional intelligence are empathy, adaptability, and stress management skills.

Empathy

Empathy is defined as a process where a person understands how others feel and responds to others' situations in a caring way. An understanding of feelings is often developed through a self-awareness of our own feelings. Empathy occurs when individuals understand how feelings represent ones' perceptions of their experience and then act to support the person (Swick, 2005). Being empathic requires the ability to read cues received from others about their feelings. An understanding of nonverbal gestures, facial expressions, body positioning, and tone of voice is of utmost importance, considering that feelings are mostly communicated in nonverbal ways (Swick, 2005).

The development of empathy begins in early childhood. Children as young as two demonstrate an increasing ability to differentiate between their own and others' feelings (Zeece, 2004). At this point, children begin to recognize that someone else's feelings are different from their own, and are better able to show comfort and concern for others (Swick, 2005). Toddlers and preschoolers begin to develop a more mature type of empathy, where they start to understand the causes and consequences of emotions and that feelings are often portrayed by facial

expressions. Empathy continues to develop and mature as children grow into the middle childhood years.

The development of empathy is influenced by several factors, including a child's environment, culture, and temperament. Strong evidence exists that child-rearing practices affect the development of empathy (Zeece, 2004). Three elements of family dynamics are integral to the development of empathy in children: parent modeling, parent-child relations, and family involvement in caring. Parent modeling consists of providing children with examples of caring in the home. Children provided with examples of empathetic behaviors are able to form images of caring as the norm (Swick, 2005). Adult-child relations, or the pattern of relationships parents have with their children, are also important in the development of empathy. Direct interactions with children in a nurturing environment that increase attachment and foster positive self-esteem will in turn teach children empathy (Swick, 2005). A family involved in caring rituals provides children with multiple opportunities to observe and become involved in activities that are grounded on the principles of nurturing and caring actions. Examples include celebrations that promote a sense of value and importance to the family, such as holidays and birthdays, and community service where children practice empathy with their family members. These activities help children see empathy as an integral part of daily living (Swick, 2005).

For some children, the positive elements of nurturing adult-child relationships are seriously disrupted or missing. Children who experience neglectful or highly negative households can fail to develop empathy and other important factors of emotional intelligence. A failure of empathy development places children at risk for continuing life problems. Research shows that children who fail to develop empathy are prone toward anti-social and self-destructive behaviors. Strayer and Roberts (2004) used a semi-natural social context to study

how empathy was associated with direct observations of anger and aggression in playgroups. They found that less empathetic five-year-old children were more angry, more physically and verbally aggressive, and less likely to engage in prosocial behaviors (Strayer & Roberts, 2004).

Bullying, which has become an increasing problem in schools today, has been found to be associated with a lack of empathetic skills. Using a social behavior questionnaire, Warden and Mackinnon (2003) found prosocial children to have greater empathic awareness when compared to bullies. Prosocial children also responded more constructively than bullies to socially awkward situations, while bullies were less aware of the possible negative consequences of their solutions to conflict (Warden & Mackinnon, 2003). It appears that bullies may lack the ability to fully understand the emotional consequences of their behaviors on others' feelings and to empathize with the feelings of others (Arsenio & Lemerise, 2001).

A lack of empathy is also apparent in individuals with conduct disorder. Individuals with conduct disorder display a variety of behaviors including persistent opposition to authority, academic truancy, lying, aggression, and violation of the basic rights of others. Deficient empathy is actually listed in the diagnosis as an associated descriptive feature (Cohen & Strayer, 1996). In a study with conduct disordered peers and comparison youth, Cohen and Strayer (1996) found that individuals with higher scores on scales that measured social maladjustment and aggression to have lower empathy.

Stress Management

A relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological variables such as depression, anxiety, and overall mental health has been well documented in many adult samples. A lack of stress management skills, or the ability to manage and control emotions, is related to higher levels of mental health problems. Individuals who score low on emotional clarity, or the

ability to understand one's emotional state, and individuals who are unable to regulate their own emotions often show poor emotional adjustment on a number of measures (Extremera & Pizarro, 2006). On the other hand, individuals who report greater understanding and regulation of their emotions had higher levels of self-esteem, an important indicator in mental health. Extremera and Pizarro (2006) wanted to replicate these results with adolescents. Their research found that adolescents reporting higher ability to discriminate among feelings and to regulate emotional states showed less anxiety and depression.

Adaptability

Other research notes that children who fail to develop emotional intelligence do not have an emotional alarm system that warns them of potential danger or harm. These children often engage in self-destructive behaviors, such as cutting, and high-risk activities without caution (Swick, 2005). Research has established a connection between lower emotional intelligence and substance abuse problems. These individuals specifically appear to have low adaptability, or the ability to manage change and solve problems appropriately. A study by Riley and Schutte (2003) found that individuals with lower emotional intelligence experienced higher levels of alcohol-related and drug related problems. Drinking alcohol or engaging in substance use may act as a type of coping mechanism. Individuals with poorer ability to perceive emotions and express feelings may be less likely to cope well. Therefore lower emotional intelligence may interfere with the selection of adaptive and appropriate coping mechanisms (Riley & Schutte, 2003).

A study by Petrides, Sangareau, Furnham, and Frederickson (2006) investigated the role of emotional intelligence in children's peer relations at school. They found that students with high emotional intelligence scores were more likely to be seen by peers and teachers as having leadership qualities and being cooperative. These students were also less likely to be seen as

disruptive and aggressive (Petrides et al., 2006). Petrides et al. (2006) concluded that the early social advantage of being viewed positively by peers often facilitates the development of social support networks that promote achievement and adaptive behavior. Peer difficulties in childhood can have detrimental consequences for later personal adjustment and have been linked to subsequent antisocial behavior.

Character Education

Based on the literature, developing emotional intelligence in children may lead to the prevention of aggressive and delinquent behaviors in today's youth. Character education in the educational system is one such way that moral skills can be developed in children. Character education is defined as a deliberate approach by school personnel, usually in conjunction with parents and the surrounding community, to help children become caring and responsible (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). Character education has become one of the fastest growing reforms in the United States. Surveys indicate that Americans often place character education as a top priority in school restructuring programs (Edington, 2002). The United States has endorsed character education in the last few years by federal law and many state laws (O'Sullivan, 2004). Although individual states have been primarily responsible for education, the No Child Left Behind Act, signed in 2002 by the federal government, has played a vital role in shaping educational outcomes (Winton, 2008).

Research supports that character education programs can produce many positive outcomes for children. Skaggs and Bodenhorn (2006) conducted an extensive study over four years where they measured several outcomes in five school districts that had initiated character education programs. The study found that districts with more fully implemented programs experienced greater improvement in character-driven behavior and had lower suspension rates in

comparison to schools with less well-implemented programs (Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006).

Hassan and Kahil (2005) studied the impact of the “Living Values Educational Program” on the behaviors and attitudes of elementary students. The “Living Values Educational Program” aims to help children reflect on different values, understand the importance of making positive personal and social choices, and to encourage educators to see the program as providing students with a philosophy of living (Hassan & Kahil, 2005). Results of the study found that there was a significant difference in the experimental group’s self-esteem perceptions after implementation of the program (Hassan & Kahil, 2005).

Research has also found that character education programs can specifically increase emotional intelligence in children. Ulutus and Omeroglu (2007) conducted a study with 120 preschool children. Forty of the students attended an emotional intelligence program that was designed to help children recognize, understand, and manage their emotions. Results showed that children in the experimental group had significantly higher scores on scales that measured emotional intelligence in comparison to students in the control and placebo groups (Ulutus & Omeroglu, 2007).

The use of stories in particular can help educators promote the development of emotional intelligence in children. Children enjoy hearing good stories, and effective readers can attract and hold a child’s attention easily (Upright, 2002). Special stories and books can highlight which social behaviors are important and how actions can help or harm others. Books that identify feelings and link them to behaviors help children identify the cause and effect of words and actions. Stories that label feelings also help demonstrate the positive consequences of prosocial behavior (Zeece, 2004). Research has found that literature can be effective in teaching children

social skills and that children ages six to nine begin to describe emotions consistent with those seen in pictures and stories (Cress & Holm, 2000).

Unfortunately, many character education programs have not been researched to determine if positive outcomes exist after program implementation. A current study by the U.S Department of Education (2007) evaluated 41 character education programs and found only seven of them to have positive effects on students. The Department of Education uses CASEL criteria when evaluating character education programs.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is an organization that works to advance the science and evidence-based practice of social and emotional learning. CASEL has designated several components that are needed in order for programs to be successful. The curriculum itself should have several defining characteristics. It is important for the curriculum to have a scope and sequence, which is a content overview of all the units taught throughout the year, including the length of time to be spent on each unit. It is also necessary for the curriculum to be integrated into the academic program content. The curriculum needs to be a comprehensive K-12 program; programs that are categorical or segmented are not as effective (CASEL, 2003).

School administration also plays a key role in the promotion of successful programs. Successful program implementation often results when administrators use policies and procedures to set programs in motion. Administrators must support the program and ensure that staff receive appropriate and effective training before implementation occurs (CASEL, 2003). A final necessary component is parent and community involvement. A strong relationship between the school and the parents and community can enhance understanding of prevention programs. Parents should be involved in curriculum decisions and the community should take a role in

policy formation (CASEL, 2003). Based on the research, character education programs need to be carefully scrutinized in order to determine if they will produce positive effects before implementation occurs.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine if the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and subsequent character education lesson plans had an effect on emotional intelligence. The research is important, because many character education programs are implemented without data to demonstrate their effectiveness. Implementing programs that are not effective is a waste of a school's time and money. Also, the research demonstrates that children with a higher emotional intelligence are more likely to experience positive outcomes in terms of friendships, mental health, and coping strategies. Therefore, instilling an effective character education program with a focus on emotional intelligence may act as a primary prevention measure.

Hypothesis: It is hypothesized that exposure to the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and subsequent character education lessons will have an affect on emotional intelligence levels in Marshall University Summer Enrichment Program students.

1. Students will have significantly different levels of interpersonal skills following implementation of the *Sad, Mad, Glad* character education program.
2. Students will have significantly different levels of intrapersonal skills following implementation of the *Sad, Mad, Glad* character education program.
3. Students will have significantly different levels of adaptive skills following implementation of the *Sad, Mad, Glad* character education program.

4. Students will have significantly different levels of stress management skills following implementation of the Sad, Mad, Glad character education program.
5. Students will have a significantly different emotional intelligence following implementation of the Sad, Mad, Glad character education program.

CHAPTER II

Method

Participants

Participants included students, ages 5-11, in the Marshall University Graduate College (MUGC) Summer Enrichment Program. Because this is a pre-test/post-test analysis, those participants that did not complete both surveys were eliminated. This resulted in a sample of 54 participants.

Program Description:

Marshall University Graduate College offers a five week Summer Enrichment Program to the surrounding Charleston, West Virginia area. The program took place at South Charleston Middle School; it began June 23, 2008 and ended July 24, 2008. The Summer Enrichment Program is designated for grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and provides educational opportunities, with a specific focus on reading. Emotional and behavioral well-being is also targeted; individual counseling, group counseling, and character education are provided throughout the course of the program. The program provides Marshall University graduate students from Special Education, School Counseling, School Psychology, and Reading an opportunity to serve as teachers and to hone their skills from their respected discipline. The Summer Enrichment Program provides a high adult to student ratio to maximize learning (Krieg, Meikamp, O'Keefe, & Stroebel, 2006).

Instruments

Sad, Mad, Glad. The *Sad, Mad, Glad* (2007) book was written by Chuck Stump and Jim Strawn. The book was written for children and links body parts to popular, positive principles and beliefs. The goal of the book is to help children share and understand feelings and build self-esteem. It is targeted for elementary-aged students. To date, no research has been conducted to

indicate the book has a significant positive influence on children. Four lesson plans were developed by the authors based on the book to be used for this study.

BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory: Short Version (BarOn EQ-i:YV (S)). The Baron Emotional Quotient Inventory for Youth, short version identifies core features of emotional intelligence in children and adolescence, ages 7-12. It is a self-report paper-and-pencil measure consisting of 5 subscales:

Intrapersonal – Measures an individual's ability to understand their emotions and to express and communicate their feelings and needs.

Interpersonal – Measures an individual's ability to have satisfying interpersonal relationships, to be good listeners, and to understand and appreciate the feelings of others.

Adaptability – Measures flexibility, effectiveness in managing change, and the ability to find positive ways of dealing with everyday problems.

Stress Management – Measures calmness, the ability to work well under pressure, impulsivity, and the response to stressful events.

Total EQ – Measures an individual's overall effectiveness in dealing with daily demands and overall happiness.

The BarOn EQ-i:YV (S) has been extensively researched and has shown acceptable reliability and validity. Administration time is estimated to be about 10 minutes. The forms provide special aids to make scoring quick and accurate; tables in the form transform raw scores into standardized scores eliminating the need to perform conversions using conventional normative tables (Bar-On & Parker, 2000).

Procedures

Permission and approval to conduct the study was granted by the Marshall University Graduate College Institutional Review Board (IRB). The study was also approved by the on-site supervisor for the Marshall University Summer Enrichment Program.

The pre-post survey design was utilized. The same inventory, the BarOn EQ-I: YV (S), was used for both administrations. The BarOn EQ-I: YV (S) was administered as a pre-test, by MUGC graduate students working in the classrooms using the specific administrative procedures provided in the manual on July 3, 2008. Students were asked to choose the answer to the questions that best described them using a Likert scale numbered 1 to 4. Students were allowed to ask questions when they could not understand an item. Items were read to students who did not have the necessary basic reading skills.

After all the surveys were administered and returned to the research team, the authors of the book came and read the book to the students. Each of the students was provided with copies of the book to keep. A schedule was prepared whereby the MUGC graduate students were required to teach a designated guidance lesson on a specific day. Over the next four days, MUGC graduate students completed four guidance lessons based on the book with their students. The four lessons included: a lesson on diversity (see Appendix I), a lesson on friendship (see Appendix II), a lesson on bullying (see Appendix III), and a lesson on good sportsmanship (see Appendix IV). The friendship lesson and diversity lesson were geared towards encouraging empathy, a combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. The lesson on bullying focused on adaptability. The good sportsmanship lesson looked at stress management skills and the ability to deal with difficult situations without behaving inappropriately. After completion of the lessons, post-test data using the BarOn EQ-I: YV (S) was collected on July 21, 2008.

Definition of Terms:

Emotional Intelligence - the ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions in self and others

Character Education - a deliberate approach by school personnel, usually in conjunction with parents and the surrounding community, to help children become caring and responsible

CHAPTER III

Results

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and subsequent character education lessons had an effect on emotional intelligence and its subfactors. Interval data, represented by numerical standard scores obtained from the BarOn EQ-I: YV (S) pre and post-data was collected and paired samples t-tests were used to analyze the data. The resulting means of the pre-test and post-test data were quantitatively compared using the Data Analysis tool in Microsoft Excel.

Paired samples t-tests were used to analyze the data. Results of Table I indicate that scores on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, stress management, adaptability, and total emotional quotient scales were not significantly higher following the implementation of the *Sad, Mad, Glad* character education program. To further analyze the data, the sample was broken down by age and paired samples t-tests were performed to determine any differences in the scales measured by the BarOn EQ-i:YV (S). Tables 2-7 indicate that no age group experienced significantly higher scores on the BarOn EQ-i:YV (S) following implementation of the program. T-tests could not be performed on the Age 11 data, considering there was only one individual in this group.

Table 1: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, All Students

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-statistic	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	97.7	11.3	53	0.6	0.28
Post-test	96.6	10.2			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	96.9	12.9	53	0.8	0.21
Post-test	99.2	17.3			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	97.5	14.7	53	1.3	0.11
Post-test	100.5	13.7			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	94.3	13.2	53	0.1	0.44
Post-test	94.6	13.1			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	96.7	11.6	53	0.7	0.25
Post-test	98.2	13.7			

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

Table 2: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 5

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Dev	df	t-statistic	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	103	15.6	1	1.0	0.25
Post-test	99.5	10.6			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	102.5	0.7	1	1.3	0.21
Post-test	107.5	6.4			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	105	24.0	1	3.7	0.08
Post-test	110	21.9			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	91.5	4.9	1	3.2	0.09
Post-test	109	2.8			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	107	7.1	1	0.8	0.28
Post-test	112	15.6			

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

Table 3: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 6

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-statistic	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	94.8	11.6	8	0.3	0.40
Post-test	93.7	12.6			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	98.4	14.6	8	0.2	0.44
Post-test	100.1	20.5			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	106.3	11.9	8	0.5	0.31
Post-test	102	17.1			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	96.2	9.8	8	0.08	0.47
Post-test	96.8	15.9			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	100.8	10.0	8	0.4	0.35
Post-test	98.2	14.5			

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

Table 4: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 7

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Dev	df	t-statistic	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	103.9	8.3	8	1.6	0.07
Post-test	97.3	9.5			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	94.3	9.1	8	1.1	0.15
Post-test	101.7	13.2			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	94.9	13.9	8	0.5	0.33
Post-test	96.8	6.6			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	96.6	16.2	8	0.7	0.24
Post-test	92.4	7.6			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	97.1		8	0.03	0.49
Post-test	97.2				

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

Table 5: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 8

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-statistic	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	103.9	8.3	8	1.6	0.07
Post-test	97.3	9.5			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	94.3	9.1	8	1.1	0.15
Post-test	101.7	13.2			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	94.9	13.9	8	0.5	0.33
Post-test	96.8	6.6			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	96.6	16.2	8	0.7	0.24
Post-test	92.4	7.6			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	97.1	7.9	8	0.03	0.49
Post-test	97.2	7.5			

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

Table 6: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 9

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-statistic	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	94.1	11.4	15	1.1	0.14
Post-test	97.6	6.6			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	93.9	14.6	15	0.3	0.39
Post-test	92.7	19.1			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	90.1	13.7	15	1.5	0.08
Post-test	96.8	12.3			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	92.4	13.8	15	0.1	0.45
Post-test	91.7	15.1			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	90.1	12.7	15	1.0	0.16
Post-test	93.8	11.8			

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

Table 7: Comparison of Pre and Post Implementation Data, Age 10

Stress Management Scale	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t-test	Probability Level Attained
Pre-test	104.6	6.1	4	1.6	0.09
Post-test	95	13.1			
Interpersonal Scale					
Pre-test	100.6	13.7	4	0.9	0.20
Post-test	108.2	14.0			
Intrapersonal Scale					
Pre-test	97	17.3	4	1.3	0.14
Post-test	106.4	19.7			
Adaptability Scale					
Pre-test	93.4	11.0	4	1.8	0.08
Post-test	105.8	12.1			
Total EQ					
Pre-test	100.4	14.5	4	0.8	0.23
Post-test	106.8	17.5			

*Significance attained at $p < 0.05$

CHAPTER IV

Discussion

This study examined the effect of the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and subsequent character education lessons on emotional intelligence in a sample of students from the Marshall University Graduate College Summer Enrichment program. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant positive change in emotional intelligence and its subfactors (intrapersonal, interpersonal, adaptability, and stress management skills) as a result of implementation. This effect was examined through a pre-test/post-test analysis of the BarOn EQ-i:YV (S) that was administered before and after character education lessons.

Paired samples t-tests showed no significant differences after the implementation in all subscales; Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Adaptability, Stress Management, and TotalEQ. A further analysis by age, showed no significant differences in the means of the BarOn EQ-i:YV (S) pre-test and post-test data. Results indicate that the *Sad, Mad, Glad* book and subsequent character education lessons did not significantly positively increase the participants' emotional intelligence.

Limitations

A major limitation of this study was a small sample size. Only individuals who completed both the BarOn EQ-i:YV (S) pre-test and post-test were included in the sample. Due to several student absences, only data from 54 students was included during analysis. T-tests to look at differences between means could not be conducted for the Age 11 group, since only one participant was included in that group. A larger sample size may have resulted in a significant positive increase in emotional intelligence and its factors.

Another limitation of this study was the structure of the curriculum. Based on the literature by CASEL (2003), the *Sad, Mad, Glad* character education program did not possess many of the

essential characteristics needed for effectiveness. The program did not have a scope and sequence, and was not comprehensive in nature. Reading of the book and the character education lesson plans took place over a one-week period. This is a relatively short time for children to experience change in emotional intelligence skills, considering that a majority of character education programs are implemented for several months or the entire school year. In addition, the graduate students who presented the lessons were not trained effectively. Staff development with ongoing training is essential in implementing programs effectively. A restructuring of the *Sad, Mad, Glad* character education program, taking into consideration the components recommended by CASEL, may lead to more positive outcomes.

One final limitation of the study was the difficulty level of the BarOn. Numerous teachers reported that students had difficulty answering some of the items and found them conceptually difficult to understand. Students appeared confused by the 4-point Likert scale and kept asking what each number meant. Many of the students enrolled in the Summer Enrichment Program experienced significant difficulties with reading skills and/or behavioral problems, which could have lead to guessing on the test items. Therefore, the scores obtained may not be an accurate estimation of emotional intelligence and its subfactors. In future studies, instruments which are easier to comprehend should be utilized.

Studies such as this one are important since time in schools is limited. Only character education programs whose effectiveness have been demonstrated should be used. Holding programs to a higher standard benefits students and results in better outcomes.

References

- Arsenio, W.F., & Lemerise, E.A. (2001) Varieties of childhood bullying: Values, emotion processes and social competence. *Social Development, 10*, 59-73.
- Bar-On, R., & Parker, J.D.A. (2000). *BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory: Youth Version Technical Manual*. North Tonawanda, NY: Multi-Health Systems Inc.
- CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2003). *Safe and sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs*. Chicago, IL: Author. Retrieved April 31, 2009 from http://www.casel.org/projects_products/safeandsound.php.
- Cohen, D., & Strayer, J. (1996). Empathy in conduct-disordered and comparison youth. *Developmental Psychology, 32*(6), 988-998.
- Cress, S.W., & Holm, D.T. (2000). Developing empathy through children's literature. *Education, 120*(3), 593-597.
- Edington, W.D. (2002). To promote character education, use literature for children and adolescents. *The Social Studies, 113-116*.
- Extremiera, N., & Pizarro, D. (2006) The role of emotional intelligence in anxiety and depression among adolescents. *Individual Differences Research, 4*(1), 16-27.
- Hassan, K. E., & Kahil, R. (2005). The effect of "Living Values: An educational program" on behaviors and attitudes of elementary students in a private school in Lebanon. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 33*(2), 81-90.
- Krieg, F.J., Meikamp, J., O'Keefe, S. & Stroebel, S. S. (2006). Field-based experience in light of changing demographics. *Trainers' Forum, 25*, 15-17.

- O'Sullivan, S. (2004). Books to live by: Using children's literature for character education. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(7), 640-645.
- Petrides, K.V., Sangareau, Y., Furnham, A., & Frederickson, N. (2006). Trait emotional intelligence and children's peer relations at school. *Social Development*, 15(3), 537-547.
- Riley, H., & Schutte, N.S. (2003). Low emotional intelligence as a predictor of substance use problems. *Journal of Drug Education*, 33(4), 391-398.
- Skaggs, G., & Bodenhorn, N. (2006). Relationships between implementing character education, student behavior, and student achievement. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 18(1), 82-114.
- Strayer, J., & Roberts, W. (2004). Empathy and observed anger and aggression in five- year olds. *Social Development*, 13(1), 1-13.
- Stump, C., & Strawn, J. (2007). *The Sad, Mad, Glad Book: The Anatomy of Your Attitude*. Scott Depot, WV: Four Dolphins Press, LLC.
- Swick, K. (2005). Preventing violence through empathy development in families. *Childhood Education Journal*, 33(1), 53-59.
- Ulutas, I., & Omeroglu, E. (2007). The effects of an emotional intelligence education program on the emotional intelligence of children. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 35(10), 1365-1372.
- Upright, R.L. (2002). To tell a tale: The use of moral dilemmas to increase empathy in the elementary school child. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 30(1), 15-20.
- U.S Department of Education. (2007). *Character Education*. Retrieved March 25, 2009 from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/reports/character_education/topic/.

- Warden, D. & Mackinnon, S. (2003). Prosocial children, bullies and victims: An investigation of their sociometric status, empathy, and social problem-solving strategies. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 21(3), 367-385.
- Winton, S. (2008). The appeal(s) of character education in threatening times: Caring and critical democratic responses. *Comparative Education*, 44(3), 305-316.
- Zeece, P. D. (2004). Promoting empathy and developing caring readers. *Childhood Education Journal*, 31(3), 193-199.

Appendix 1

Mad, Sad, Glad Lesson on Diversity

Purpose: To help students understand similarities and differences, and that they can be “different” but still be the “same.”

Materials:

- Paper divided into two columns labeled “same” and “different”
- *Mad, Sad, Glad* books for all children

Procedure:

1. Divide the group into pairs
2. Give each pair a sheet of paper with two columns labeled “same” and “different”
3. Instruct each pair to list as many things as possible that they have in common (same) and things that are differences between them.
4. Provide examples to children to get them started or if they are stuck:
 - What is your favorite color?
 - What is your favorite food?
 - How many brothers and sisters do you have?
 - Do you have a pet?
 - What’s your favorite book or game?
5. Go around to each pair of students and ask them to share a few of their answers with the class
6. Hand out the *Mad, Sad, Glad* books to all of the children
7. Have them take turn reading pages 15 and 21 and explain how skin is different colors.
8. Have the children stand and challenge them to find some else in the group whose skin is exactly the same color. Emphasize the word *exactly*.
9. Give the children 2-3 minutes to complete the task.
10. The task should be impossible because everyone’s skin is different
11. Discuss with the group that although we are different in color, we share the same interests and feelings.

Appendix II

Sad, Mad, Glad Lesson - Friendship

Purpose: To demonstrate that it takes a lot of different characteristics to be a true “friend.”

Materials:

- Chart paper and a marker/dry erase board/chalkboard (to write idioms)
- Mad, Sad, Glad books for all children
- Little booklets (4-5 sheets of paper stapled together)

Procedure:

1. Read the **Mad, Sad, Glad** book to the students. Read some pages and have the students volunteer to read pages.
2. When questions are asked in the book, ask them directly to children to make for discussion.
3. Asked the students, based on the book, what makes a good friend?
4. Have them try to remember the idioms stated in the book and help them if necessary.
5. Write them on a large piece of paper or blackboard
6. Here are a list of the common idioms:
 - Use your head – think before you act or say something that might hurt others
 - Keep your nose clean – stay out of trouble and keep your friends out of trouble
 - Don’t stick your nose where it doesn’t belong – you need to know when to leave people alone and stay out of their business
 - Take time to stop and smell all the roses – be thankful for our family and friends
 - Don’t have a big mouth – don’t tell others’ secrets
 - Bite your tongue – keep thoughts inside your head that might hurt others
 - Lend a helping hand – work well together with others
 - Have your friend’s back – protect them from harm
 - Calm down. Breathe deep and slow – if you get angry at someone try to calm down and take a deep breath.
 - Put your best foot forward – always do your very best even when it comes to friendship
 - Have a heart of gold – help others
7. Explain the idioms.
8. Give children a booklet that says “What makes a good friend?” on the front cover
9. Have the children draw pictures or write words in the book that describes what a good friend does.

Appendix III

Sad, Mad, Glad Lesson -What is bullying and how can we stop it?

Purpose: To introduce bullying, to explore its prevalence, and to come up with ways to stop bullies.

Materials:

- Chart paper and a marker/dry erase board/chalkboard (to write ways children bully and ways to stop bullying)
- Sad, Mad, Glad books for all children
- Little booklets (4-5 sheets of paper stapled together)

Procedure:

1. Hand out the *Mad, Sad, Glad* books to all of the children. Read the pages in the book that relate to bullying.
2. Ask the students what a bully is. Then explain what a bully is. Someone who hurts or scares other people. Ask the students, “What's the difference between bullying and just fooling around?”
3. Introduce the ‘Ways Children Bully’. Explain that each bully is different but these are the most common ways people bully.

Ways Children Bully

- 1. Physical – Hit, Kick***
- 2. Social – Gossip, Rumors***
- 3. Verbal – Teasing***
- 4. Scaring – Say they will beat you up***

4. Have a brainstorming session to come up with ideas for how to prevent and/or stop bullying behavior. Ask students for their input. These may include the following:

1. Don't Bully Others
2. Help Others
3. Speak Out – Tell them to Stop
4. Ignore It
5. Get Adult Help
6. Include Everyone
7. Don't join in

5. Have students create booklets that have 4-5 ideas for preventing bullying (To save time it would be best to have the paper already stapled together. The students can write or draw pictures to show how to handle different bullying situations)

6. **Conclusion** – Give an overview of the information provided by the lesson (there are many types of bullies, there is a lot we can do to prevent bullies, etc.). Tell students that they should keep these booklets so they know what to do when they come across a bullying situation

Appendix IV

Sad, Mad, Glad Lesson –Sportsmanship – No one wants to lose

Purpose: To teach children the importance and values of good sportsmanship

Materials: Sad, Mad, Glad books for all Children

Procedure:

Step 1: Refer to page 26. Be sure to explain that “losing” doesn’t always refer to sports or athletics, but can be defined as when you get poor grades or are unsuccessful.

Step 2: Ask the class, “Stand up if you’ve ever “lost.” (Everyone should stand up.)

NOTE: If a student doesn’t stand, ask them, “Do you ALWAYS win?” If necessary continue to ask questions until they understand they have lost at one point in their life. (Be careful not to embarrass anyone).

Step 3 – Using the picture on page 26, ask the class:

“What does it feel like when we lose?”

“Who else is sad or disappointed when we lose?”

“Why does “losing” occur?”

“How should you behave when you lose?”

Step 4 – End the discussion by reinforcing that losing can be difficult. Explain the importance of good sportsmanship and that what is most important is that you did your best.